

ticians who enriched themselves at the expense of the country-- amongst noble ladies who enriched themselves at the expense of virtue--amongst divines who, adding to the vices of the courtier that of hypocrisy, enriched themselves at the expense of men's belief in the sacred truths which they mocked by lives of callous indifference to every Christian precept which was not coincident with the study of their own temporal interest. In such an atmosphere Chesterfield spent most of his life. He accepted human nature as it presented itself to him. What is to this age the immorality of Chesterfield, was merely the polite gallantry of those among whom he lived. His dissimulation is merely the record of his observation of the manner in which his acquaintances conducted themselves one with another; and his abstaining from the inculcation of those religious truths may be regarded as due to the nausea excited by the debasement of truths mouthed by such professional teachers of them as he met. It is a pity that he was no better; but that he was so much a man is a matter for congratulation."¹

Lord Chesterfield's Letters to His Son consists of three hundred twenty-two letters covering a correspondence of twenty-nine years, from 1737 to 1768. This series of letters commenced when the son, Philip Stanhope, was five years of age and continued until the son's death in 1768. They were written through out the concluding half of Lord Chesterfield's life when his most serious interest was the education and advancement in life of this, his only child. Practically every letter reveals the fact that the

1. Letters to His Son, Preface by W. W. Givvings, London, 1890.